

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1836

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU

COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 12836

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJECT: LDP LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE

REF: TOKYO 12764

SUMMARY. DURING THE PAST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, MIKI, FUKUDA AND OHIRA HAVE SPENT MORE THAN FIVE HOURS TRYING TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP CRISIS. AS THIS IS WRITTEN, THEIR DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE. THE ONLY THING CERTAIN AT THIS POINT IS THAT THE TENSIONS WHICH MARKED THE OPENING OF YESTERDAY'S SESSION HAVE SUBSIDED A BIT. END SUMMARY.

1. THE AUGUST 24 MIKI-FUKUDA-OHIRA MEETING ENDED WITH ONLY AGREEMENT TO MEET AGAIN, BUT IT DID SERVE TO MOVE THE LDP LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE AWAY FROM CONFRONTATION TOWARD NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

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2. UNTIL THAT TIME THE CRISIS ATMOSPHERE WAS FURTHER INCREASED BY ANTI-MIKI FORCES. TWO MEETINGS OF ANTI-MIKI CABINET MEMBERS WERE HELD. A CONSERVATIVE CAUCUS, WITH MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS MF ALL LDP DIET MEMBERS PRESENT, RESOLVED THAT LDP UNITY SHOULD BE RESTORED BEFORE AN EXTRAORDINARY DIET SESSION, CODE WORDS FOR MIKI'S IMMEDIATE RESIGNATION. LDP ELDER NAKA FUNADA, HOWEVER, WAS MORE FRANK THAN WISE WHEN HE URGED THAT POSSIBLE FURTHER LOCKHEED REVELATIONS BE BASED ON "POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS." HIS COMMENT HAS ALREADY DRAWN CONSIDERABLE FIRE AS A NEW "LOCKHEED COVER-UP". ATTEMPT.

3. AT THE MIKI-FUKUDA-OHIRA MEETING ITSELF, THE MOOD APPARENTLY WAS MORE RESTRAINED. THEY AGREED ONLY TO MEET AGAIN AUGUST 25, BUT CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY (AND MIKI SUPPORTER) IDE, IN BRIEFING THE PRESS, SAID THE POSSIBILITY OF AGREEMENT HAS EMERGED. FUKUDA AND OHIRA, IN THEIR FOLLOW-UP JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE, ALSO SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THERE WAS NO BASIS FOR SETTLEMENT YET, DISCUSSIONS WERE ON TRACK.

4. AFTER HEARING FUKUDA'S AND OHIRA'S REPORT OF THE MEETING, THE RECONVENED LDP CAUCUS AGREED TO FOREGO A MIKI NON-CONFIDENCE MOTION AT LEAST UNTIL AUGUST 26. THIS BROUGHT SHARP CRITICISM FROM TANAKA FACTION MEMBERS WHOSE CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE CAUCUS STRATEGY IS NOW QUESTIONABLE.

5. LATER THAT EVENING, MIKI TOLD A TV AUDIENCE THAT HE WOULD NOT BE FORCED OUT OF OFFICE. ALTHOUGH ADMITTING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIMSELF AND FUKUDA-OHIRA ON WHO SHOULD CALL A GENERAL ELECTION, HE INDICATED THAT COMPROMISE SHOULD BE POSSIBLE.

6. MIKI, FUKUDA AND OHIRA RESUMED THEIR BARGAINING SESSION AT 1400 ON AUGUST 25. FOUR HOURS LATER THERE IS NO SIGN OF ITS ENDING.

7. COMMENT. SPECULATION IS RIFE AND DIVIDED AS TO WHO IS WINNING IN THE ONGOING STRUGGLE AND HOW IT WILL

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ALL END. BUT EVEN INSIDERS ARE SHORT ON HARD INFORMATION.
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